

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 156399
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011
DRAFTED BY IO/UNA:BJSHARP
APPROVED BY IO/UNA:/*53**5
S/S-O:KDSCOTT
-----005311 202025Z /70
O 201829Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0000

S E C R E T STATE 156399

EXDIS FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT PORT LOUIS 692 ACTION SECSTATE JUNE 19

QUOTE S E C R E T PORT LOUIS 0692
EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CG XA XJ PBOR PDEV PORG UNSC OAU US UR CU MOPS
SUBJECT: AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

REF: STATE 153145

SUMMARY. THIS CABLE RESPONDS TO REQUEST IN REFTEL
FOR COMMZNTS ON AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S PROPOSALS REGARDING
AFRICAN PROBLEM-SOLVING. AFTER ANALYZING THE RECORD
OF THE OAU AND THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH IT OPERATES,
IT CONCLUDES THAT LITTLE HELP CAN BE EXPECTED FROM
THAT QUARTER IN DEALING WITH CONFLICT SITUATIONS
IN AFRICA AND SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION. IT FINDS
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 156399

MERIT, HOWEVER, IN SUGGESTION FOR GREATER UNITED
NATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN PEACE-KEEPING AND
RECOMMENDS A LOOK AT THE UN PEACE-KEEPING EFFORT
(WHICH USG SUPPORTED) IN ZAIRE IN THE EARLY SIXTIES,
WHICH WAS A SUCCESS FOR U.S. POLICY. END SUMMARY.
1. CONSULTATIONS WITH A BROAD RANGE OF WELL-EXPOSED
AFRICAN LEADERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH INTRA-AFRICAN
CONFLICTS WOULD BE USEFUL BOTH TO OBTAIN THE BENEFIT
OF THEIR IDEAS AND TO COMMUNICATE TO THEM OUR CONCERN
OVER THE ESCALATING SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION WHICH,

THOUGH NOT NEW, HAS REACHED A LEVEL THREATENING TO
INVITE GREAT-POWER CONFLICT ON AFRICAN SOIL.

2.(WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT MUCH IF ANY HELP FROM THE OAU,
BASED ON ITS PAST PERFORMANCE. IT HAS MAINTAINED
A DISMAL RECORD OF EVADING MEDIATION OF INTER-STATE
CONFLICTS AND OF IGNORING OUTRAGEOUS BREACHES OF
RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT CONDUCT AS IN UGANDA AND EQUATORIAL
GUINEA. THE OAU HAS BEEN INSTITUTIONALLY ABLE TO ACT
ONLY IN CASES WHERE THERE HAS BEEN UNANIMITY OF OPINION
AMONG THE MEMBERS, FOR EXAMPLE IN PRESSING FOR THE
OVERTHROW OF WHITE-DOMINATED REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.
IN ALL CASES WHERE THERE HAS EXISTED A CONFLICT BETWEEN
AFRICAN STATES OR A STRONG DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AMONG
THEM ON A CONTINENTAL ISSUE, IMMOBILITY HAS BEEN THE RULE.
WITNESS THE FAILURES TO DEAL WITH THE ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA
AND WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICTS. EVEN A CAUSE SUCH AS

THE CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA IN 1975 FOUND THE OAU IMMOBILIZED
BECAUSE OF DIVIDED OPINION, UNTIL THE DIRECT INTERVENTION
OF SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES AGAINST THE MPLA RALLIED NEAR
UNANIMOUS OAU MEMBER SUPPORT TO THE SIDE OF THE MPLA

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 156399

AND AGAINST THE OTHER TWO ANGOLAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS,
UNITA AND THE FNLA.

3. THE MEMBERS OF THE OAU ADHERE TO SEVERAL CARDINAL
PRINCIPLES: (A) ANY CHANGE IN THE BORDERS INHERITED
FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD IS TO BE CONDEMNED AND
OPPOSED; (B) SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS OF WHATEVER
CHARACTER ARE TO BE CONDEMNED AND OPPOSED; (C) GUERRILLA
MOVEMENTS ATTEMPTING THE OVERTHROW OF "LEGITIMATE"
GOVERNMENTS ARE TO BE CONDEMNED AND OPPOSED (THE WHITE
GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA ARE BY DEFINITION NOT
"LEGITIMATE" ALL THE OTHERS ARE "LEGITIMATE"
REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY CAME TO POWER). BECAUSE OF
THESE PRINCIPLES SOMALIA HAS ENJOYED ALMOST ZERO
SUPPORT FROM OAU MEMBERS IN ITS CONFLICT WITH ETHIOPIA
AND LIKEWISE THE ERITREANS (WHO ENJOY ARAB BUT NOT
BLACK AFRICAN SUPPORT). BECAUSE THE THREE PRINCIPLES
ABOVE ARE CONSIDERED SACROSANCT, MOBUTU HAS BENEFITTED
FROM MUCH GREATER TACIT SUPPORT IN THE SHABA INCIDENTS
THAN ONE WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE EXPECTED, AND THE
EUROPEAN RESCUE OPERATION AT KOLWEZI RECEIVED MUCH LESS
CONDEMNATION THAN ONE MIGHT HAVE ANTICIPATED. (COMPARE
THE NEARLY UNIVERSAL AFRICAN OUTCRY OVER THE
SIMILAR OPERATION IN STANLEYVILLE IN 1964, BEFORE
THESE OAU PRINCIPLES HAD BECOME SO FIRMLY ENTRENCHED.)

4. MERCENARIES, BY OAU DEFINITION, ARE EXTRA-
CONTINENTAL FORCES IMployED TO ATTEMPT THE OVERTHROW

OF A "LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT OR TO SUPPORT A SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT OR TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN EXISTING BORDERS. EXTRA-CONTINENTAL FORCES USED IN CONTRARY SENSES ARE NOT CONSIDERED MERCENARIES, WHICH IS WHY THE CUBANS HAVE EXCAPED CONDEMNATION BY MOST AFRICANS AND WHY CASTRO AND HIS ALLIES HAVE BEEN AT PAINS TO DENY THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE KATANGANS, WHO REPRESENT A SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT CHALLENGING A

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 156399

"LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT.

5. LIKE YOUNG STATES ON OTHER CONTINENTS, THE MEMBERS OF THE OAU ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF CHALLENGES TO SOVEREIGNTY OR QUESTIONING OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE COMPLETE NEGLECT OF AFRICAN LEADERS TO DEAL WITH THE ATROCIOUS INTERNAL REPRESSIONS IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS UGANDA AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA. AND IT ALSO EXPLAINS THE NEARLY TOTAL ABSENCE OF CRITICISM OF THE DEPENDENCE OF STATES SUCH AS ETHIOPIA AND ANGOLA ON CUBAN TROOPS TO DEFEND THEIR BORDERS, SQPRESS SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS AND COUNTER CHALLENGERS TO THEIR CONTINUED RULE (SUCH AS UNITA). REGARDLESS OF WHAT ELSE THEY MIGHT BE, THE MENGISTU AND NETO (AND AMIN AND MACIAS) REGIMES ARE CONSIDERED "LEGITIMATE" AND THEREFORE THEY HAVE THE "SOVEREIGN" RIGHT TO DO ANYTHING THEY PLEASE WITHIN THEIR OWN BORDERS. THIS COULD BE CONSIDERED A STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF THE OAU MEMBERSHIP.

6. THE MASSIVE INJECTIONS OF SOVIET ARMS AND CUBAN FORECES INTO PLACES SUCH AS ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA IN RECENT YEARS HAVE NOT AROUSED THE CRITICISM AND CONDEMNATION THAT WE MIGHT HAVE WISHED BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN INVITED BY THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED AND HAVE BEEN USED IN PUPPORT OF THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF THE OAU DESCRIBED ABOVE. THIS SITUATION, HOWEVER ONE MIGHT DEPLORE IT, WILL NOT CHANGE SOON, AND IT MUST THEREFORE BE ACCEPTED AS A REALITY. THE POTENTIAL FUTURE INTERVENTIONS OF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN SUPPORT OF THE MOVEMENTS CHALLENGING WHITE REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL BE SUBJECT TO EVEN LESS CRITICISM

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 156399

(IN FACT, PROBABLY NONE AT ALL) BECAUSE IN ADDITION TO THE "LEGITIMACY" OF SUCH HELP, THERE IS THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT OF THE STRUGGLE OF OPPRESSED BLACKS TO LIBERATE THEMSELVES FROM WHITE DOMINATION.

7. ALL OF THE ABOVE IS PRESENTED TO SUPPORT THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS FUTILE TO TRY TO OPPOSE OR PREVENT SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION WHEN IT IS SANCTIONED BY DEFENSE OF THE CARDINAL OAU PRINCIPLES OUTLINED ABOVE. OUR SOLE RE COURSE IS TO FORECLOSE, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE CREATION OF SITUATIONS WHICH LEAD AN AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO INVITE SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT BECAUSE OF ITS DESPERATE NEED FOR FOREIGN HELP. THIS ARGUES IN FAVOR OF THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC EFFORT TO RESOLVE OR AMELIORATE DISPUTES WHICH INVOLVE: (A) EFFORTS TO CHANGE BORDERS; (B) SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS; (C) DISSIDENT MOVEMENTS TRYING TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT.

8. TO CITE BUT ONE EXAMPLE, WE SHOULD HAVE DONE EVERYTHING WITHIN OUR POWER TO OPPOSE AND PREVENT THE SOMALI IRREDENTIST EFFORT TO INCORPORATE THE OGADEN, NO MATTER HOW JUSTIFIED IT MIGHT BE ON TRIBAL, HISTORICAL OR OTHER GROUNDS. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IT IS AND WAS IMPORTANT TO BE ON THE RIGHT SIDE REGARDING THE ERITREAN SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT. (THE CUBANS WERE ON THE WRONG SIDE AND HAVE NOW BECOME NEUTRAL AND WILL PROBABLY EVENTUALLY SWITCH.) THIS IS A MOST UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION TO ADVOCATE, AS IT IS UNJUST TO THE ERITREANS, WHO SHOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN GIVEN THEIR INDEPENDENCE INSTEAD OF BEING INCORPORATED INTO ETHIOPIA (BUT THAT IS A MISTAKE MADE IN THE PAST AND TOO LATE TO BE CORRECTED NOW).

9. IMPORTANT LESSONS COULD BE LEARNED FROM A STUDY OF THE NIGERIA-BIAFRA CIVIL WAR FOR THIS WHOLE QUESTION OF SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS. HAD NIGERIA BEEN A SMALL,

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 156399

POOR AND WEAK COUNTRY AT THE TIME OF THE BIAFRAN SECESSION, AND HAD CUBAN TROOPS BEEN NEEDED TO PUT DOWN THE SECESSION, WHAT WOULD BE THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE U.S. AND THE SOVIETS/CUBANS IN NIGERIA TODAY.

10. IT IS TRUE THAT THE BORDERS OF AFRICAN STATES WERE NOT DRAWN RATIONALLY. YET, THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE. TO REDRAW THEM TO ELIMINATE OR AMELIORATE THE PROBLEM OF OPPRESSED ETHNIC OR TRIBAL MINORITIES WOULD REQUIRE THE CREATION OF A THOUSAND OR MORE MINI-STATES ON A CONTINENT WHERE ONLY A FEW STATES ARE VIABLE ECONOMIC ENTITIES AT THEIR PRESENT SIZE. IF ANYTHING, THE DIRECTION SHOULD BE TOWARD THE CREATION OF A UNITED STATES OF AFRICA, WHEREIN ETHNIC RIVALRIES WOULD BECOME SUBMERGED WITHIN A MUCH LARGER, RACIALLY COHESIVE IF TRIBALLY DISPARATE, ECONOMICALLY PROMISING CONTINENTAL STATE. EVEN IN CASES WHERE THE BORDERS WERE DRAWN RATIONALLY THE THE COLONIAL POWERS--RWANDA AND BURUNDI--ETHNIC CONFLICT HAS NOT BEEN AVOIDED,

IN FACT HAS BEEN BLOODIER THAN NARLY ANYWHERE ELSE,
AS THE TUTSI HAVE SLAUGHTERED THE HUTU IN BURUNDI AND
THE HUTU HAVE MASSACRED THE TUTSI IN RWANDA. ONE
MIGHT HOPE THAT EVENTUALLY, IN A UNITED STATES OF
AFRICA, THE TUTSI AND THE HUTU MIGHT BEHAVE NO WORSE
THAN THE HATFIELDS AND THE MCCOYS.

11. THE RECORD OF THE OAU DOES NOT LEAD ONE TO BE
OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE UTILITY OF AN AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION FOR DEALING WITH SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS.
THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF AFRICAN STATES OVER
CHALLENGES TO THEIR "SOVEREIGNTY" AND OUTSIDE CONCERN
OR INTERVENTION IN WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THEIR
INTERNAL AFFAIRS MAKES IT DOUBTFUL THAT A HUMAN RIGHTS
SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 156399

COMMISSION--IF IT COULD EVEN BE ESTABLISHED--WOULD ACHIEVE
ANYTHING MORE THAN EXPEND SCARCE FUNDS ON CONFERENCES.
THERE IS NOT A SINGLE AFRICAN COUNTRY WHICH IS WITHOUT
AN "ETHNIC MINORITY PROBLEM," AND IT IS PREDICTABLE
THAT THE GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD A COMMISSION WOULD BE:
"IF YOU WON'T TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEM, I WON'T TALK
ABOUT YOURS."

12. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SUGGESTION THAT WE EN-
COURAGE THE AFRICANS TO RESORT MORE TO THE UNITED
NATIONS FOR PEACE-KEEPING MACHINERY, MEDIATION AND EVEN
MILITARY FORCES HAS MERI, AND IT IS SOMEWHAT SUR-
PRISING THAT THIS RESOURCE HAS BEEN PRETTY MUCH NEGLECTED
BY THE AFRICANS IN RECENT YEARS. IT WAS NOT SO LONG
AGO THAT THEHUN WAS HEAVILY ENGAGED IN PEACE-KEEPING IN
AFRICA. ZAIRE WAS ONE OF THE FOUR PRINCIPAL FOREIGN
POLICY PREOCCUPATIONS OF THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION
(THE OTHERS HAVING BEEN CUBA, LAOS AND BERLIN). MOISE
TSCHOMBE'S SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN KATANGA WAS
SUPPRESSED BY AN INTERNATINAL MILITARY FORCE UNDER
THE UN FLAG LARGEY FINANCED BY THE USG. IT IS TRUE
THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES REFUSED TO SHARE THE
COSTS AND THIS NEARLY BANKRUPTED THE UN, BUT THE
ULTIMATE BENEFIT OF AVOIDING DIRECT GREAT POWER CONFLICT
IN AFRICA WAS WORTH THE COST. THERE IS NO DOUBT AN
UNDERSTANDABLE RELUCTANCE FOR US TO ADVOCATE THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN ANGOLA AND
ETHIOPIA IN SUPPORT OF MARXIST REGIMES SUCH AS THOSE
OF NETO AND MENGISTU, BUT IF THE ALTERNATIVE TO UN
INVOLVEMENT IS CUBAN MILITARY FORCES WITH MASSIVE
INJECTIONS OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT, PERHAPS WE NEED
TO EXAMINE THE OPTIONS AGAIN.

13. THE PROPOSALS FOR MUTUAL RESTRAINT ON WEAPONS
SUPPLY AND INTERVENTION SOUND A BIT UTOPIAN. THE
CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER CUBAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR SHABA

SECRET

PAGE 08 STATE 156399

TWO SHOWS THAT AN OUTSIDE POWER CAN CLAIM IT IS EXERCISING RESTRAINT (AND CAN CONVINCE AT LEAST SOME PEOPLE) WHEN THAT IS QUESTIONABLE. WE WONDER ALSO WHETHER THE SOVIETS WOULD BE ANY MORE WILLING THAN WE ARE TO TIE THEIR HANDS IN ADVANCE IN A FASHION THAT WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM HELPING THEIR IDEOLOGICAL BRETHREN IN TIME OF NEED. THE SECURITY COUNCIL VETO COULD BE AN ADDITIONAL HINDRANCE.

14. TO CONCLUDE, WE NEED TO EXAMINE EACH INDIVIDUAL AFRICAN CONFLICT AS AN INDIVIDUAL CASE TO FIND AN APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION, AS EACH ONE HAS ITS SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND IT IS DIFFICULT, PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE, TO GENERALIZE AN "AFRICAN POLICY" TO COVER ALL SUCH SITUATIONS. WE SHOULD MOBILIZE ALL OUR DIPLOMATIC RESOURCES TO PREVENT SUCH CONFLICTS FROM ESCALATING TO THE POINT WHERE AN AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FEELS REQUIRED TO CALL IN SOVIET/CUBAN HELP, RECOGNIZING THAT SUCH FOREIGN INTERVENTION WILL BE TOLERATED BY MOST AFRICANS IF IT IS EMPLOYED TO DEFEND NATIONAL FRONTIERS, TO SUPPRESS A SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT, OR TO PRESERVE A "LEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT IN POWER. IF WE ARE UNSUCCESSFUL IN PREVENTING SUCH ESCALATION, WE SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER RESORTING TO A UN PEACEKEEPING EFFORT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT. WHILE THE UN CANNOT REACT AS QUICKLY AS THE SOVIETS (OR OURSELVES) SUCH "NEUTRAL" ASSISTANCE COULD BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO AFRICAN STATES SENSITIVE ABOUT THEIR "SOVEREIGNTY" THAT COMMUNIST SUPPORT, EVEN IF THE AFRICAN REGIME IN QUESTION IS MARXIST.

15. AS PART OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT STUDY OF THIS PROBLEM, IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO TAKE A

SECRET

PAGE 09 STATE 156399

LOOK AGAIN AT THE U.S. AND UN INVOLVEMENTS IN ZAIRE IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, WHICH FROM TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE APPEAR A DECIDED SUCCESS FOR U.S. POLICY, AND TO COMPARE OUR PERFORMANCE THEN WITH ANGOLA IN 1975 AND ETHIOPIA/SOMALIA IN 1977-78, WHERE THERE WAS NOT RESORT TO THE UN AND OUR INVOLVEMENT WAS MOSTLY CLANDESTINE (UNTIL CUT OFF) IN ONE CASE OR ABSENT ENTIRELY IN THE OTHER. KEELEY.

UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE156399
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO/UNA:BJSHARP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780257-0560
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197806115/baaaeyzu.tel
Line Count: 324
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8d314f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: STATE 153145
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2177827
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFRICAN POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, PORG, MOPS, CG, XA, XJ, US, UR, CU, UNSC, OAU
To: n/a INFO USUN N Y
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8d314f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014